

Time to Celebrate

Written by L.A. Plume
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It flies, it passes us by, where does it go? We make time, we take time; it's time for this, or time for that.



Or, we're out if it: time. We have Greenwich Mean Time, Daylight Savings Time – so many concepts for something we can't actually feel, or hear, or touch. Yet we see its effects and we mourn its passing. We wear watches, look at clocks, check our cell phones, to see where it is. A thoughtful way to spend it is to share it, celebrating a birthday, for instance. We have one every year, so do our friends. How best to celebrate? With a party! Whether simple, sublime, or ridiculous, parties are all about camaraderie. There is absolutely nothing inappropriate, or ego-centric, about having your own birthday party, either. Our birthday is our day, our rite of the passage of time.

The last few months have been joyful with birthdays. Occasionally friends say, "I don't want a party. I don't want to have another birthday." Don't believe them. How could anyone not want a party? They come with presents and cake, two of my all time favorite things unless someone could buck tradition and popularize birthday pie. And to not want another birthday? Seriously, consider the alternative.

I got an email a few days ago from a friend lamenting her birthday: "Turned fifty something. It sucks. I was happy to turn fifty, that was because I looked thirty something... I went into a gym today to check out their services. The girl who was young enough to be my daughter, and perky enough to be on drugs, tells me to sign in. Then she tells me to write down my phone number, address, and age. Are you stupid? I ask her. You think I'm going to put my age down next to my name in a little town like Beaufort? First of all, I can't remember my age. I think I'm still 51 but maybe I'm really 52. My mother sent me a card with a check for \$52.00 in it. I wondered why \$52: did she get a stimulus check or social security bonus? Did she have \$52 hanging around? Then I open the one from my sister. There's a check for \$52.00 in that one too. Then it dawns on me, maybe I'm 52."

I responded by sweetly suggesting that she might be 104 and her family split the amount. Happy Birthday, dear, we would all like to forget how old we are becoming! What about gifts? I'm always happy with wine or other consumables, such as jewelry. Artists note cards are a special favorite. Photos of the party on a disc or tucked into an album are always thoughtful.

What kind of party? It doesn't matter at all, a bottle of wine on a blanket at the water's edge, a picnic in the park, or that age old favorite of mine – the surprise party.

Twenty-some of us appeared at Steve's back door en masse while he was enjoying a cocktail on the front porch. So what if it was a week before his actual birthday? So much better to catch him unaware! We all brought food and drinks and cakes and pies. There was some chair-top dancing as we're too old to risk falling off the table.

Dusty nearly backed out of Harold's Country Club when he walked into the bar filled with

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friends calling "Surprise!" If he'd seen us before he was completely in the door, we might have been treated to a Yemassee version of the moon walk. There was beer and wine and cheesecake and presents. The birthday boy had so much fun that he had to be driven home by not one, but two, friends.

Ali brought a roast chicken when she thought she was having dinner with two, and walked into a party of twelve. There was an abundance of laughter, photos, and cake. The photos were a good thing because we all got to see, forever preserved, what wonderful dancers we really are(n't).

The Duchess celebrated a Rather Important Birthday in London. It began with the Girls Tiara Party and ended a week later with a family picnic/garden party. Various festivities ensued during the week, including a spot of her on the telly with Andre Agassi in the royal box at Wimbledon! Those of us from across the pond were given accommodations in her home or with friends. I was fortunate to be hosted by a delightful couple who waited up for me at night with wine and stories; every morning I was served breakfast and given shopping and other pertinent advice. (The experience made me realize my practice of placing chocolates on the guest pillows needs ratcheting up a notch.) Did I really have time to go to London, for a weekend, for a birthday party? Of course! I had the time; one of those incredible, unforgettable times of my life.